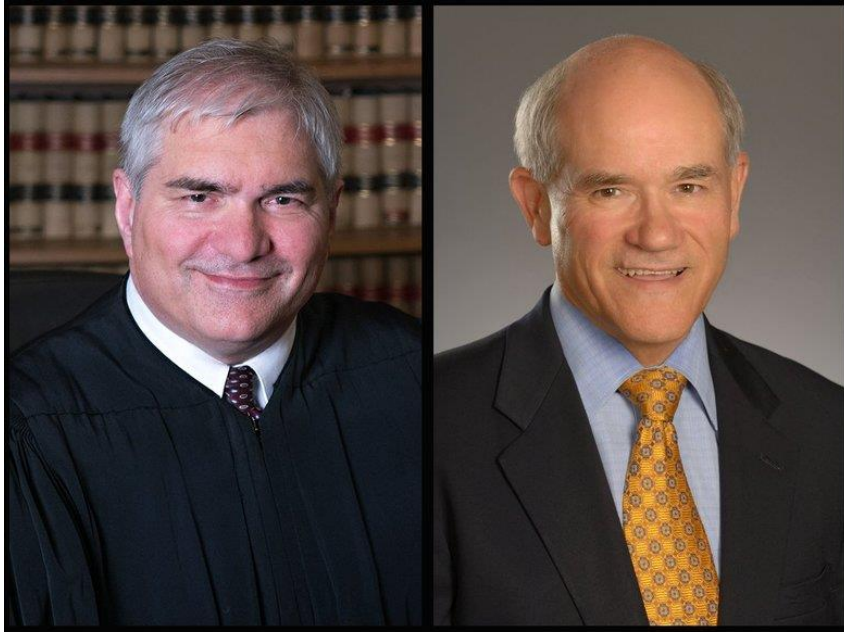


Charlie Wiggins retains Supreme Court seat despite campaign to oust him

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Dave Larson, left, and Charlie Wiggins.

Justice Charlie Wiggins beat back a well-funded challenge as one of three incumbent justices who reclaimed their seats on the Washington state Supreme Court.



By [Steve Miletich](#)

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The all-out effort to deny state Supreme Court Justice Charlie Wiggins another six-year term, mounted by a group of billionaires, failed as the vote count Tuesday night showed Wiggins defeating Federal Way Municipal Court Judge Dave Larson.

Wiggins was leading with 58 percent of the vote.

In [two other state Supreme Court races](#), Chief Justice Barbara Madsen defeated Kittitas County Prosecutor Gary Zempel with 64 percent of the vote, and Justice Mary Yu also won; she was leading Gonzaga University law professor David DeWolf with 59 percent.

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and a handful of other donors [poured \\$900,000 into a late-campaign ad barrage](#) to defeat Wiggins.

A political-action committee (PAC), Citizens for Working Courts, raised \$550,000 to air positive TV ads about Larson, presiding judge in Federal Way Municipal Court.

Gates contributed \$200,000 to the PAC and \$300,000 came from Vulcan, the company that manages the interests of Paul Allen, fellow billionaire and Microsoft co-founder.

Another PAC, Judicial Integrity Washington, raised more than \$350,000 for TV ads against Wiggins, citing a majority opinion he wrote overturning on constitutional grounds a man's conviction in a child-pornography possession case.

The man was subsequently arrested and charged with trying to arrange sex with a 14-year-old girl he met online who actually was an undercover officer.

The biggest donors to that PAC were Camas, Clark County, billionaire Ken Fisher, who runs an investment firm; Bellevue developer Kemper Freeman's Kemper Holdings; and Seattle Mariners owner John Stanton, who built his wealth in the wireless industry.

Wiggins also came under criticism for voting to overturn the state's charter-schools law, which was ruled unconstitutional by the state Supreme Court last year and subsequently overhauled by the state Legislature.

Gates was a big supporter of the law.

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